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HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

Seventy-second session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE SECOND PART (PUBLIC)* OF THE 1955th MEETING

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva,
on Friday, 27 July 2001, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. BHAGWATI

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* The summary record of the first part (closed) of the meeting appears as document CCPR/C/SR.1955.

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GE.01-43791 (EXT)

The public part of the meeting was called to order at 11.10 a.m.

SUBMISSION OF REPORTS BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 40 OF THE COVENANT (agenda item 4)

1. The CHAIRPERSON informed the Committee of the bureau's proposals concerning the dates for submission of the next periodic reports of States parties whose reports had been considered at the current session. The dates proposed were 1 January 2004 for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, 1 August 2005 for Guatemala and the Czech Republic, and 1 August 2006 for Monaco and the Netherlands. If he heard no objection, he would consider those proposals as adopted.

2. It was so decided.

ORGANIZATIONAL AND OTHER MATTERS (agenda item 3)

3. The CHAIRPERSON said that at their latest meeting the chairpersons of the treaty bodies had put forward two suggestions. The first was that each chairperson should introduce the annual report of his or her respective body in the General Assembly, as did the Chairperson of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. That suggestion had been discussed in the bureau of the Human Rights Committee; one bureau member, Mr. Kretzmer, was not in favour of it, as the Chairperson might be called upon to respond to questions of a political nature. The suggestion was now submitted to the Committee as a whole.

4. Ms. CHANET said she understood Mr. Kretzmer's concern but was confident that the Chairperson would not exceed the terms of the mandate entrusted to him on the Committee's behalf. In her view, it was for the Committee, and not for the Office of the High Commissioner, to introduce the annual report in the General Assembly.

5. Mr. YALDEN and Mr. GLÉLÉ AHANHANZO shared Ms. Chanet's point of view.

6. The CHAIRPERSON noted that the Committee endorsed the first suggestion made by the chairpersons of the treaty bodies. The second suggestion was to organize an enlarged meeting of the representatives of the treaty bodies, in which the Chairperson and two members of each body would take part, in order to discuss matters of mutual concern. Two topics had been put forward for consideration, namely the harmonization of the bodies' working methods and the question of reservations made by States parties. Funds been made available specifically for that meeting.

7. Mr. YALDEN felt that better use could perhaps have been made of the funds.

8. Mr. SCHEININ said he had no objection to the principle of such a meeting. Noting that financial questions had not been an obstacle in the case of the meeting, he said that he would like the Committee officially to request funding for an extra week of meetings in 2002, in order eliminate the backlog of communications to be considered.

9. Ms. CHANET endorsed Mr. Scheinin's proposal. She considered that the Committee should take part in the enlarged meeting of the representatives of treaty bodies. She doubted whether the representatives of the various committees would succeed in finding new ways of dealing with the question of reservations made by States parties, but progress could be made regarding the recurring problem of how to improve working methods.

10. Following an exchange of views in which Mr. SCHEININ, Mr. YALDEN, Ms. CHANET, Mr. KLEIN, Sir Nigel RODLEY and he took part, the CHAIRPERSON said that the Committee would officially request that seventy-fifth session, to be held in summer 2002, should be extended for one week, for the purpose of considering communications. The additional week should immediately follow the session or, should that prove impossible, precede it.

11. It was so decided.

12. The CHAIRPERSON said that at its current session the Committee had declared three communications admissible and eight communications inadmissible. It had adopted views concerning nine communications and had discontinued consideration of five more. A total of 26 communications had thus been dealt with - a high number indeed. The Committee's task had been greatly facilitated by the outstanding work done by the highly competent Petitions Team.

13. Mr. SCHEININ recalled that, at the end of the seventy-first session, a short document drawn up by Mr. Henkin and himself on the improvement of working methods had been distributed to the Committee members. He would like the Committee to examine the document in plenary meeting at its seventy-third session and a small working group or the bureau to prepare the discussion.

14. After an exchange of views between Mr. SCHEININ, Mr. KHALIL, Mr. KLEIN, Ms. CHANET and he took part, the CHAIRPERSON stated that the document drafted by Mr. Scheinin and Mr. Henkin would be translated into the Committee's working languages and then submitted by the bureau to the plenary Committee at the seventy-third session.

15. It was so decided.

CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

16. After an exchange of courtesies, the CHAIRPERSON declared the seventy-second session of the Human Rights Committee closed.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.